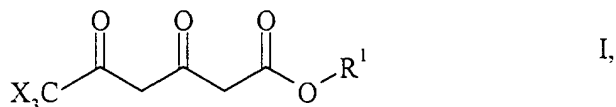


**Method for the production of 6,6,6-trihalo-3,5-dioxohexanoic acid esters**

The invention relates to a method for preparing 6,6,6-trihalo-3,5-dioxohexanoic esters of the formula

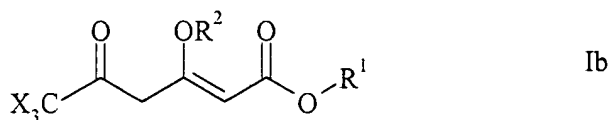
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and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

or

10 the enol ethers thereof, of the formula



and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

15 in which the substituents X are each independently of one another fluorine, chlorine or bromine, and in which  $\text{R}^1$  is in each case alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, and  $\text{R}^2$  is alkyl, cycloalkyl, allyl or benzyl, starting from pyranones of the formula

20



in which X has the abovementioned meaning.

25 Ethyl 6,6,6-trihalo-3,5-dioxohexanoates of the formula I are employed for example for the production of herbicides and agrochemicals (JP-A-06-049039).

Known methods for synthesizing substituted tricarbonyl compounds having a 3,5-dioxohexanoic ester basic structure start for example from ethyl acetoacetate, which is condensed with ethyl benzoate in THF in the presence of  $\text{KH}/\text{BuLi}$  (WO-A-94/11361), or  
 30 with a highly substituted 3-oxopentanamide in THF in the presence of  $\text{NaH}/\text{BuLi}$  (WO-A-02/055519).

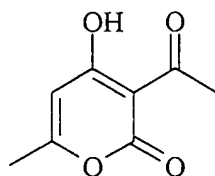
A method for preparing *tert*-butyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-3,5-dioxohexanoate from 2,2,2-trifluoroethyl

trifluoroacetate and *tert*-butyl acetoacetate is disclosed in WO-A-02/02547.

A further alternative variant for preparing substituted tricarbonyl compounds proceeds by ring opening of a pyranone such as, for example, of dehydracetic acid, which is converted by means of  $\text{Mg}(\text{OMe})_2$  in methanol into methyl 3,5-dioxohexanoate (Batelaan, J.G., *Synthetic Commun.* **1976**, 6, 81–83).

These known methods have the disadvantage that costly reagents such as BuLi are used.

10 Solladié, et al., *Tetrahedron: Asymmetry* **1996**, 7, 2371–2379, disclosed that ring opening of dehydracetic acid of the formula



15

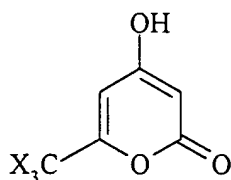
to give the tricarbonyl compound is possible, but leads to elimination of the acetyl substituent previously introduced during the synthesis. However, a loss of mass has disadvantageous effects on the profitability of a method in industrial process management.

20 It was therefore an object of the present invention to provide a simple method for preparing alkyl 6,6,6-trihalo-3,5-dioxohexanoates and the enols and enol ethers thereof, which can utilize easily obtainable pyrones as starting compounds.

This object is achieved according to the invention by the method claimed in claim 1.

25

It has been found that compounds of the formula



II,

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in which the substituents X are each independently of one another fluorine, chlorine or bromine, provide, after conversion of the hydroxyl group into an ether group and subsequent opening of the pyran ring with a metal alcoholate, depending on the further reaction

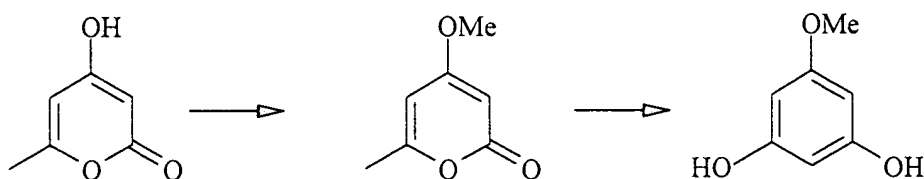
conditions, compounds of the formula I or the enol ethers thereof of the formula Ib in good yield.

The present method is distinguished by no loss of mass occurring during the ring opening, and the number of carbon atoms present in the basic structure being maintained.

5

The method of the invention is surprising because it is known that 4-hydroxypyran-2-one cannot be converted into the open-chain tricarbonyl compound by reaction with sodium methanolate but, on the contrary, as shown in the reaction equation below is firstly methylated on the hydroxyl group and then the pyranone ether is converted into a phloroglucinol derivative (Effenberger, F. et al., *Chem. Ber.* **1984**, 117, 3270–3279).

10



15 It was thus not possible to expect the ring opening resulting in the method of the invention.

The starting compounds of the formula II of the method of the invention can easily be obtained. Thus, for example, 4-hydroxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one can be prepared by reacting trifluoroacetic acid with ketene.

20

Alkyl means here and hereinafter in particular an optionally halogen-substituted, linear or optionally branched group having 1 to 8 carbon atoms, such as, for example, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, *n*-butyl, isobutyl, *sec*-butyl, *tert*-butyl, pentyl, hexyl, heptyl, octyl.

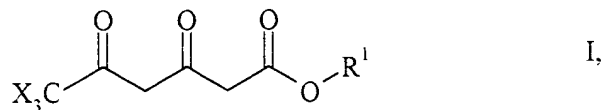
25 Cycloalkyl means here and hereinafter in particular a cyclic group having 3 to 8 carbon atoms, such as, for example, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, cycloheptyl, cyclooctyl.

30 Aryl means here and hereinafter in particular an optionally alkyl- and or halogen-substituted aromatic group having 6 or 8 carbon atoms, such as, for example, phenyl, *p*-tolyl or naphthyl.

Aralkyl means here and hereinafter in particular an alkyl group substituted by an aryl group, such as, for example, phenylethyl, where the alkyl group comprises 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and

the aryl group is an optionally halogen-substituted, aromatic or heteroaromatic group having 4 to 8 carbon atoms, such as, for example, phenyl, naphthyl, 2- or 3-furanyl, 2- or 3-thiophenyl or 2-, 3- or 4-pyridinyl.

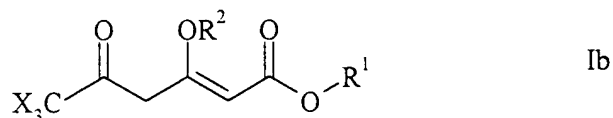
5 In the method of the invention for preparing compounds of the formula



and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

10 or

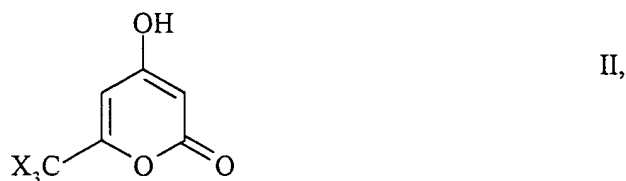
the enol ethers thereof of the formula



15 and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

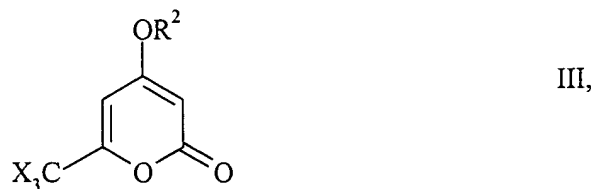
in which the substituents X are each independently of one another fluorine, chlorine or bromine, and in which  $\text{R}^1$  is in each case alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, and  $\text{R}^2$  is alkyl, cycloalkyl, allyl or benzyl, compounds of the formula

20



in which X has the aforementioned meaning, are converted by reacting the hydroxyl group  
25 with a compound of the formula  $(\text{R}^2\text{O})_2\text{SO}_2$  or with a compound of the formula  $\text{Y}-\text{R}^2$  in which Y is tosyl, chlorine, bromine or iodine, and in which  $\text{R}^2$  in each case has the abovementioned meaning, into a compound of the formula

30



in which  $\text{R}^2$  and X have the stated meanings,

and the pyranone ring of the reaction product is subsequently opened by reaction with a metal

alcoholate of the formula  $R^1O^- \frac{1}{n}M^{n+}$  in which  $R^1$  has the abovementioned meaning, and  $M^{n+}$  is an alkali metal or alkaline earth metal cation and  $n=1$  or  $2$ , depending on the further reaction conditions, to give compounds of the formula I or Ib.

5 Suitable reagents for the preparation according to the invention of compounds of the formula III are for example dimethyl sulfate, diethyl sulfate, methyl iodide, ethyl bromide, methyl tosylate, ethyl tosylate, phenyl tosylate, allyl chloride, allyl bromide, benzyl chloride or benzyl bromide.

10  $M^{n+}$  in the metal alcoholates of the formula  $R^1O^- \frac{1}{n}M^{n+}$  is preferably  $Li^+$ ,  $Na^+$ ,  $K^+$ ,  $Mg^{2+}$  or  $Ca^{2+}$ .

If a strong acid is added ( $pH < 1$ ) to the reaction mixture of compounds of the formula III after addition of the metal alcoholate, and the mixture is reacted further, compounds of the  
15 formula I and enols thereof can be obtained. In this method, the radical  $R^2$  is eliminated.

If a weak acid, or no acid at all, is added to the reaction mixture of compounds of the formula III after addition of the metal alcoholate, and the mixture is reacted further, enol ethers of the formula Ib and enols thereof can be obtained. In this variant of the method, the radical  $R^2$  is retained.

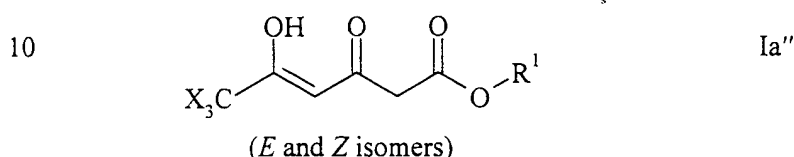
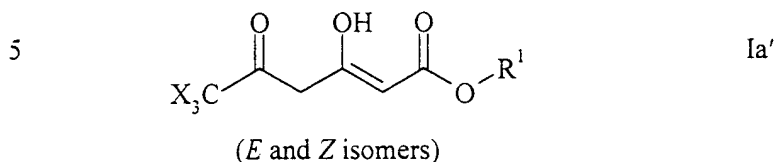
20 The enol ethers of the formula Ib can likewise be converted into compounds of the formula I and enols thereof in poor yields after addition of strong acids and under strongly acidic conditions with elimination of the radical  $R^2$ .

Strong acids mean in the method of the invention for example HCl, HBr, HI,  $H_2SO_4$ ,  
25 trifluoroacetic acid or solid acids such as, for example, acidic zeolites such as H-ZSM-5 or acidic sheet silicates.

Weak acids mean in the method of the invention for example acetic acid and dilute aqueous HCl,  $H_3PO_4$  or  $H_2SO_4$  acids or addition of strong acids after previous addition of water.

30 In a preferred embodiment, compounds of the formula III are converted into compounds of the formula I in which X is fluorine and  $R^1$  is  $C_{1-8}$ -alkyl, with elimination of the radical  $R^2$ . In a further preferred embodiment,  $R^1$  is  $C_{1-4}$ -alkyl. In a particularly preferred embodiment,  $R^1$  is methyl.

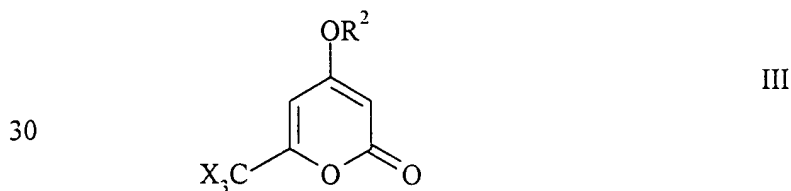
Compounds of the formula I in the method of the invention also means the corresponding enols such as, for example, of the formulae



singly or as mixture, and are also encompassed by the invention. The equilibrium distribution of compounds of the formula Ia to the enol forms thereof (as *E* and *Z* isomers) is influenced by various influences such as, for example, the solvent, the temperature or optionally by protonating or deprotonating additions. After kugelrohr distillation, for example, compound Ia with X = fluorine and R<sup>1</sup> = methyl without solvent is predominantly in the form of the monoenol of the formula Ia' at room temperature.

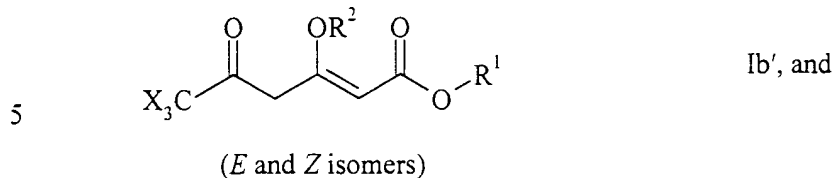
20 The enols of compounds of the formula I differ from one another by the enolized carbonyl group and the location and orientation of the resulting double bond(s). The carbonyl groups at C<sup>3</sup> and/or C<sup>5</sup> may be enolized. It is possible in this connection for there to be a double bond in each case between carbon atoms C<sup>2</sup>/C<sup>3</sup>, C<sup>3</sup>/C<sup>4</sup>, C<sup>4</sup>/C<sup>5</sup> or conjugated double bonds between C<sup>2</sup>/C<sup>3</sup> and C<sup>4</sup>/C<sup>5</sup>, and the double bonds may additionally be in the *E* or *Z* configuration. The enols are usually in the form of mixtures of a plurality of forms.

The invention likewise encompasses compounds of the formula

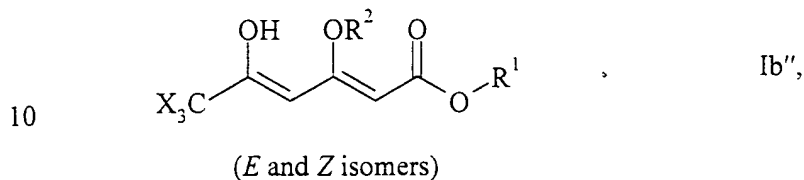


in which X is in each case independently of one another F, Cl or Br, and in which R<sup>2</sup> is alkyl, cycloalkyl, allyl or benzyl.

Likewise encompassed by the invention are enol ethers of the formula



and enols thereof, such as, for example



in which X is in each case independently of one another F, Cl or Br, and in which R<sup>1</sup> is alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, and in which R<sup>2</sup> is alkyl, cycloalkyl, allyl or benzyl. The compounds of the formula Ib may, just like the compounds of the formula I described above,  
15 be in the form of *E* and/or *Z* isomers. Depending on the external conditions, however, only the carbonyl group at C<sup>5</sup> may be enolized. The number and location of the resulting double bonds at C<sup>2</sup>/C<sup>3</sup> and/or C<sup>4</sup>/C<sup>5</sup> correspond to the *E* and *Z* isomers of the enols of the compounds of the formula I.

20 Alkyl 3,3,3-trihalo-3,5-dioxohexanoates can be prepared by the method described above from 4-methoxy-6-trihalomethylpyran-2-ones. Preferably, methyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-3,5-dioxohexanoate is prepared from 4-methoxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one.

### Examples

25

The following examples illustrate the procedure for the method of the invention without this being regarded as a restriction.

#### Example 1

30 4-Methoxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one (III; R<sup>2</sup> = methyl, X = fluorine)

Sodium carbonate (1.35 g, 13 mmol) and dimethyl sulfate (2.17 g, 17 mmol) were added to a solution of 4-hydroxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one (3.0 g, 17 mmol) in acetone (50 mL).

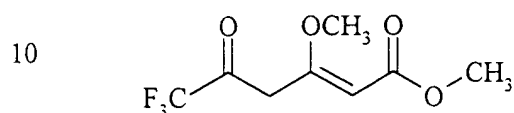
The mixture was heated under reflux for 3 hours and, after cooling, filtered. Concentration of

the filtrate resulted in 2.9 g of crude product as a brown oil. It was possible to obtain 4-methoxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one (2.74 g, 14 mmol, 83%) as colorless needles with a melting point of 61°C by crystallization from hexane.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ: 7.01 (d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 1H), 5.98 (d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 1H),  
 3.7 (s, 3H).

### Example 2

Methyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-2-methoxy-5-oxo-2-hexenoate (Ib; R<sup>1</sup> = R<sup>2</sup> = methyl, X = fluorine)



and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

A solution of 4-methoxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one (2.7 g, 14 mmol) in a methanolic magnesium methanolate solution (8.5% Mg(OMe)<sub>2</sub>, 8.36 g, 8 mmol) was heated under reflux  
 15 for 16 hours. The solution was concentrated and taken up in water and ethyl acetate, and the organic phase was brought to pH 5 by adding dilute hydrochloric acid. The organic phase was separated off, dried and concentrated. 1.5 g of crude product were obtained as a yellow oil. Kugelrohr distillation at 0.04 mbar and about 160°C afforded methyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-3-methoxy-5-oxo-2-hexenoate (1.50 g, 6.6 mmol, 48%) as a pale yellow oil.

20 Data for the main compound:

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ (resonance lines of the enol form Ib, without *E/Z* determination): 6.05 (s, 1H), 3.9 (s, 3H), 3.82 (s, 2H), 3.62 (s, 3H).

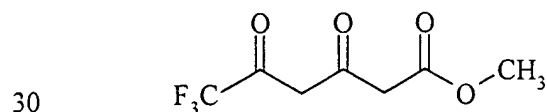
<sup>19</sup>F-NMR (386 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ: -76.8.

MS: 227 [M+H]<sup>+</sup>.

25

### Example 3

Methyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-3,5-dioxohexanoate (I; R<sup>1</sup> = methyl, X = fluorine)



and the enols and *E* and *Z* isomers thereof

A solution of 4-methoxy-6-trifluoromethylpyran-2-one (10 g, 52 mmol) in a methanolic magnesium methanolate solution (8.5% Mg(OMe)<sub>2</sub>, 62.8 g, 61 mmol) was heated under

reflux for 2 hours. Concentrated aqueous HCl (25.5 g, 250 mmol) was added to the reaction solution, and the mixture was heated under reflux for a further 2 hours, then cooled and concentrated in vacuo to about 20% of the initial volume. The residue was mixed with 10 mL each of methylene chloride and water. The organic phase was separated off, washed with  
 5 water, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated. Kugelrohr distillation at 0.04 mbar and about 160°C afforded methyl 6,6,6-trifluoro-3,5-dioxohexanoate (2.8 g, 13 mmol, 26%) as a pale yellow oil.

Data for the main compound:

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ (resonance lines of the enol form Ia', without *E/Z*  
 10 determination): 6.0 (br, 2H), 3.8 (s, 2H), 3.65 (s, 3H).

<sup>13</sup>C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ (resonance lines of the enol form Ia', without *E/Z* determination): 181.6 (s), 167.7 (s), 116.9 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> 286 Hz), 95.9 (t), 52.0 (q), 49.7 (t), C-3 not identifiable.

MS: 212 (M<sup>+</sup>).